

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

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Property Name Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead 

State Virginia

County Rockingham

Reference Number 14000237

WARNING

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- 1) The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, Section 304[16 U.S.C. 470w-3(a), confidentiality of the location of sensitive historic resources; 16 U.S.C. 470w-3(b), Access Determination; 16 U.S.C. 470w-3(c), Consultation with the Advisory Council];
- 2) The Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended [Public Law 96-95; 16 U.S.C. 470aa-mm; with special attention to Section 9 subsections a and b in their entirety];
- 3) The National Parks Omnibus Act of 1988, Section 207 (1 and 2);
- 4) 36 CFR 800.6(5) and 36 CFR 800.11(c);
- 5) Department of the Interior Departmental Manual (519 DM 2);
- 6) National Park Service Management Policies 2006, Section 5.1.1;
- 7) Director's Order 28, Section 5a;

Information in these files that may be restricted can include, but is not limited to, such things as: locations of archeological sites; locations of features within archeological sites; types of artifacts and their recovered locations; the existence of and/or the locations of excavated and unexcavated human remains; photos, maps and text that includes sensitive archeological or cultural information; specific or general information of a sensitive cultural nature such as information about religious ceremonies; rock art or other cultural items; creation stories; or properties associated with such things.

Please note that Section 304 (c), [16 U.S.C. 470w-3(c)], 36 CFR 800.6(5), and 36 CFR 800.11 (c) require consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation on reaching determinations of withholding. Further, 36 CFR 800.6(5), and 36 CFR 800.11 (c) specify including the views of the SHPO/THPO, Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian organizations, related to the confidentiality concern in reaching determinations of withholding.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

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1. Name of Property

Historic name: Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead

Other names/site number: VDHR File Nos.082-0117 and 44RM0097

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. Location

Street & number: 6639 North Valley Pike

City or town: Harrisonburg State: VA County: Rockingham

Not For Publication: ☒ Vicinity: ☒

see redactions

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national statewide X local
Applicable National Register Criteria:

X A B X C X D

Julie Anger 3/27/14
Signature of certifying official/Title: Date
Virginia Department of Historic Resources
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official: Date

Title : State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☒ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:)

Patrick Andrews
Signature of the Keeper

5/14/2014
Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
Public – Local ☐
Public – State ☐
Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☐
District ☒
Site ☐
Structure ☐
Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

| Contributing | Noncontributing | |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| <u>9</u> | <u>1</u> | buildings |
| <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> | sites |
| <u>2</u> | <u>2</u> | structures |
| <u>2</u> | <u>0</u> | objects |
| <u>15</u> | <u>3</u> | Total |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

DOMESTIC: Kitchen/Meathouse

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling – Tenant House

OTHER: Cave

COMMERCIAL: Lodge

COMMERCIAL: Filling Station

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE: Agricultural Outbuildings: Barn, pump house, windmill, trough, poultry houses, silos

TRANSPORTATION: Bridge

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DOMESTIC: Single Dwelling

OTHER: Cave

COMMERCIAL: Vacant

AGRICULTURAL/SUBSISTENCE: Agricultural Outbuildings: Barn, pump house, trough

TRANSPORTATION: Bridge

VACANT/NOT IN USE

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

MID 19TH-CENTURY: Greek Revival

OTHER: Rustic

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: STONE: Limestone; WOOD: Weatherboard;

METAL: Tin, Aluminum; SYNTHETIC: Vinyl

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

The 142-acre Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead complex is located in the Shenandoah Valley along the Dry Fork bottomlands on the west side of U. S. Route 11 (the former Valley Pike), six miles north of Harrisonburg, the county seat of Rockingham County, Virginia. The nominated property, boasting 15 contributing resources, and three non-contributing resources (all of which postdate the period of significance), is situated between Massanutten Mountain to the east and the Allegheny Mountains to the west. The north/south corridor of Interstate-81 parallels U.S. Route 11 a half-mile to the east. Several remaining mature deciduous trees shade the front of the ca. 1859 frame Greek Revival-style Harrison House. Six additional contributing resources are associated with the house. The earliest resource on the property is a ca. 1820 log kitchen that stands off the rear corner of the house. Overlooking the house 200 feet to the south is a ca. 1870 post- and-beam bank barn. To the north of the house are a ca. 1900 manmade pond and a metal windmill. A ca. 1930 fish pond is in front of the house, and a ca. 1930 stone-lined trough is behind the house. In 1929, Col. Edward T. Brown opened the site of the Blue Grottoes of Virginia and Civil War Museum (now Melrose Caverns) as a tourist attraction to capitalize on the recent improvement of the Valley Pike into U.S. Highway 11 ***begin redaction***
end redaction. Four contributing 1929 associated buildings ***begin redaction***
end redaction were built in a rustic architectural style similar to that of contemporaneous National Park Service buildings. The Melrose Caverns Lodge is a large two-story, two-bay building constructed from local limestone rocks laid in a rubble pattern. An arched stone wraparound porch with log balustrades accents the building. The one-story Melrose

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Caverns Filling Station fronting U.S. Route 11 features the same architecture. An arched stone bridge spans Dry Fork as it leads to the Lodge, and a limestone covered pump house that continues to pump water to the entire farm. Along the northern boundary of the property is a ca. 1955 frame tenant house with two contemporary concrete and frame poultry houses and two 1980s metal silos. The Harrison Farmstead has been an active farm for nine documented generations and was designated a Virginia Century Farm in the 1980s. Although the Melrose Caverns and Lodge closed in 1967, and the filling station soon thereafter (with the opening of Interstate 81), the property retains its intact rural setting; the epitome of the Shenandoah Valley, with historical resources punctuating the rolling agricultural landscape.

Narrative Description

Harrison Farmstead Complex

House, ca. 1859, Contributing Building

The house was built facing southeast directly towards the Valley Pike as a two-story, three-bay, ell-shaped, mid-nineteenth Greek Revival-style frame house, with exterior-end composite brick chimneys of broad stone bases. The façade features a centered gabled, two-story, three-bay wood porch with a flat-sawn balustrade and a wooden stepped entrance off the south side of the porch. Two historic family photographs depict a one-story frame porch with a flat-sawn balustrade and wide center steps leading into the front. The existing centered door on the second-floor also shows in these photographs. The original two-story frame ell also has an historic one-story frame kitchen extending off of its north corner with a shed roof. The south, inset elevation of the ell featured a two-story porch, which has been in-filled.

After the house suffered from a small fire in the 1980s, mostly from smoke damage, the exterior was clad in vinyl siding and six-over-six vinyl window sash replaced the six-over-six wood window sash. The front porch was probably changed at this time too.¹ The centered front door is solid wood with two vertically aligned raised panels flanked by narrow sidelights and matching transom. Standing-seam metal covers the low-pitched, side-gabled and hipped roofs.

The interior of the house remains predominately unaltered, with a center hallway and flanking parlors; the center hallway and the south parlor retain their original Greek Revival-style window and door corner-ear moldings. The front door, south parlor door and mantel have all been originally feathered. The north parlor features a more decorative trim with crown molding. The center hallway remains unaltered with a raised panel staircase featuring a delicate flat balustrade and turned newel posts. Two matching bedrooms are above the parlors. All original wood flooring and lath-and-plaster walls and ceiling are retained in the main house.

The first floor of the rear ell contains the dining room, an office, and open access into the one-story kitchen. The rear of this ell also features a second staircase, of which on the back of a riser can be seen the following inscription that is etched into the wood: "This house was built for Madison Moore in 1859 by Rueben W. Harrison."² The second floor ell contains two intact bedrooms. The original wood flooring is retained in the rear ell, and while the first floor retains all original lath-and-plaster walls and ceilings, the second floor bedrooms, which suffered smoke damage, have new walls and trim.

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The first floor of the enclosed side porch is now used as the main entrance to the house, which can lead straight ahead into the dining room or down the hallway to the center hall of the main house. The second floor of the enclosed porch on this south elevation features a sunroom. The attic, accessed through the southeast bedroom of the second floor ell, shows the milled rafters of the gable roof with no ridge board and milled sheathing. The milled floor joists received fire damage and the rafter boards are charred, particularly in the main house, while many of the rafter boards in the ell were completely replaced. The basement was not accessible. There are no notable landscaping features associated with the house, and many of the mature deciduous trees that show in historic photographs have perished.

Secondary Resources

Kitchen/Meat House, ca. 1820, Contributing Building

The kitchen, which faces due south, (with its chimney on the north wall), now stands angled off of the northwest rear corner of the rear ell of the house. This one-story, one-bay, front-gabled building was built of hewn log and later clad in its current weatherboard siding. The building rests on a raised, coursed-limestone foundation with basement. Wood shingles clad the medium-pitched roof. A large, exterior-end, coursed-limestone chimney heated the building from the north elevation. Stone steps set in the earth lead down to the basement on the west elevation (opposite the house). The six-foot high basement has a dirt floor, exposed stone walls, and round, un-hewn log ceiling joists.

The front entrance of the kitchen features a landing of three circular-shaped steps composed of limestone with a matching half-round, standing-seam-metal clad canopy. One historic family picture depicts a more traditional shed roof porch, but the steps are not distinguishable and it is assumed that they are added too. The one-room interior has wide-planked floors and exposed log walls. A large stone fireplace and hearth dominate the north wall. A door and window bay are evident on the interior, while only the window bays remain evident on the exterior, and they are shuttered closed. The front door is a wood batten door with strap hinges. Narrow, corner side-winder stairs lead up to the sleeping loft, which is lit by a six-light sash, front-gable window. The roof has been replaced with widely spaced roof rafters and plywood sheathing, also indicating replacement roof shingles. The building is vacant and in fair condition.

Barn, ca. 1870, Contributing Building

The large bank barn faces east towards U.S. Route 11, and is accessed off of the driveway as it leads to the main house. The northeast gable-end faces the house and the barn is often in sight as it stands on a raised knoll of pasture land. The banked, rear elevation with two sets of original double sliding doors faces west towards the Dry Fork bottomlands. The timber-framed building is covered with white painted wood siding; its post-and-beam construction features mortise-and-tenon joinery. The large gable roof is covered with old and new standing-seam metal that is attached to regularly-spaced and milled wood sheathing. The barn is used for storage. A 1960s addition to the front of the barn included a stone wall and metal shed roof for the holding of the

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beef cattle. The barn is a good representation of the mid-19th century agricultural life of the Shenandoah Valley. The barn is still in use and is in fair-to-good condition.

A medium-sized **pond, ca. 1900, (Contributing Site)** accents the property 100 feet to the north of the house, and its associated metal **windmill water pump, ca. 1900, (Contributing Object)** stands west of the pond. A small concrete **fish pond, ca. 1930 (Contributing Structure)** rimmed with fieldstones is located in the front yard, and a small, round, limestone-lined **trough, ca. 1930 (Contributing Object)** serves the beef cattle along Dry Fork. A 1980s metal storage **shed (Non-Contributing Building)** sits on the north side of the barn, and postdates the property's period of significance.

Caverns Complex

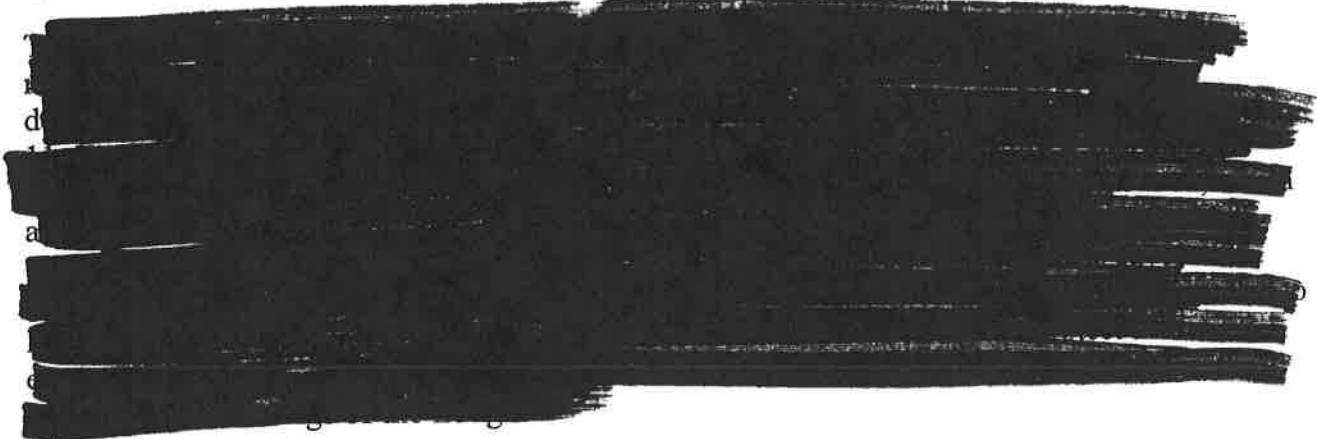
Cave, Contributing Site

The cave is similar to and typical of other caves that formed in the Shenandoah Valley, where the water penetrated through the soft limestone rocks and eventually formed underground rooms or 'chambers' and passageways. Melrose Cavern measures about a half-mile long, which is of moderate size; smaller than some public caves, and probably bigger than other non-public caves. The cave could be similar to other caves as yet undiscovered in the Shenandoah Valley, most of which are concentrated between Winchester and Staunton.

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Melrose Lodge, 1929, Contributing Building

The lodge, constructed in a Rustic architectural style between 1928 and 1929, opened for business on June 19, 1929, and remains much today as it did then. The large, rectangular-shaped, two-bay, two-story, gable-fronted, limestone-clad building stands on a raised limestone-clad basement and is accented by two large exterior-end (engaged) limestone chimneys. Its gable-fronted façade is dominated by the centered chimney, which is flanked by double-leaf, glass-paned doors, with an elaborate three-bay, wraparound front porch with double stone staircases lined with hand-wrought metal hand railings. The wraparound porch towers over the building with its series of elliptically arched openings with round log balustrade. The use of the uncoursed fieldstone, and the wood treatments, produces a dramatic surface treatment, reminiscent of the National Park Service lodges of the 1920s and 1930s.

The lodge was built into the hillside (of the cave) with its façade facing east and its longitudinal, south elevation exposed and visible from the driveway. Two wings, housing an office and a reading room, extend off each corner of the north elevation. The lodge is located about 225 feet down the access road from the historically associated Filling Station (see below) and U.S. Route 11. The gravel and grass driveway loops around in front of the lodge. The arched porch openings on the side and rear elevation have been in filled with framed knee walls and plywood and sliding wood windows. A ca. 1980s one-story bathroom section was added to the rear elevation but is obscured from view, although it does block the rear porch. The medium-pitched, front-gabled roof is covered with corrugated metal. A series of five bays on both floors of the southeast longitudinal elevation light the interior space.

The expansive, two-story-height, open interior room is lit by five bays on the first floor with a centered double-leaf, glass-paned door flanked by two windows on each side and vertically aligned clerestory windows above on the southeast wall. The dramatic room is accented by a series of four wood ceiling trusses, a second-floor level balcony on three sides (except the cave/hillside wall), and massive limestone fireplaces dominating the north and south gable-end walls with flanking double-leaf glass-paned door openings. A flight of wood stairs leads up to the balcony from each end of the "Great Hall." A cast-iron railing lines the balcony and several metal wagon-wheel light fixtures hang from the ceiling. The original wood floor has standard 3-inch to 4-inch wood tongue-and-groove floor boards. The walls have a thick plaster coat and are painted an off-white color, while all the trim is darkly stained. A historic family photograph of the interior, taken from the balcony, denotes how the room was used as a Civil War museum upon its opening. (These artifacts were auctioned off at its closing).⁵

The centered stone fireplace accents the rear wall with flanking arched openings onto the rear porch. The northeast wall has three door openings--one leading into the kitchen/office wing with raised steps, arched double-leaf doors leading to the colonnade entrance of the cave and courtyard, and one door opening up into the Reading Room wing with raised steps. This room is entirely original and unaltered. The kitchen wing has a 1950s linoleum floor covering.

The Reading Room, so designated in a historic pamphlet, and also by its sense of a cozy house library, is a well-proportioned rectangular-shaped room with a small stone fireplace at its rear

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wall flanked by two small windows (boarded) and two windows on the northwest wall (boarded) and a closet along the interior wall. This room features the same floor boards as the main room, with dark painted wood trim and plaster walls. The raised basement is constructed of poured concrete clad with limestone, with wood casement windows, and is only fully exposed on its southeast elevation. This area contained apartments for the employees. The middle section contained public bathrooms, a single room for each gender, which could only be accessed by steep, narrow steps from the first floor.

The entrance to the cave is accessed through the Great Room/Civil War Museum, and was through double-leafed, glass-paned doors on the northwest elevation, which led out onto a short three-bay, limestone colonnade. The adjacent courtyard is enclosed on the other sides by the lodge and a limestone wall with an attached fountain that spewed into a concrete and stone-lined basin. This fountain may have served as the inspiration for the ca. 1930 fish pond at the main house. The courtyard floor is dirt without any landscaping, although landscaping plans are in progress for the lodge. Although vacant, the lodge is occasionally used, remains in good condition, and is awaiting a new use.

Melrose Filling Station, 1929, Contributing Building

The one-story, three-bay filling station was constructed in the same rustic architecture as the lodge with un-coursed limestone fieldstone walls, stone arched porches wrapping around three sides (also in-filled with plywood), its triple-arched stone canopy for the gas pumps, and a large interior stone chimney. Asphalt shingles and corrugated metal covers its hipped roof and original, paired six-over-six wood windows light the interior. The building also served as an information station, another possible tourist enticement. The building stands in the fork of the access road that converges as it leads straight to the lodge and caverns from U.S. Route 11, 500 feet northeast of the Harrison House. More recently used as a single dwelling, the interior is open across the width of the station with a centered fieldstone fireplace accenting the main wall. A bathroom is off of this room, as well as two entrances to the side porches that have been in-filled for the rental unit. This building is vacant, in good condition, and ready for a new use to serve the community once again along U.S. Route 11.

Pump House, 1929, Contributing Building

A limestone covered one-room, one-bay pump house with a pyramidal hipped roof clad in asphalt shingles stands across the circular driveway from the front of the lodge. The pump house continues to provide water to the entire farmstead. The building is in fair-to-poor condition but is being repaired.

Bridge, 1929, Contributing Structure

The elliptically, triple-arched bridge spans Dry Creek. Its poured-in-place concrete construction is faced with rubble limestone, thus matching the architectural character of both the filling station as well as the lodge. The bridge appears in good condition.

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Tenant House Complex

Tenant House, ca. 1955, Contributing Building

The one-story, frame tenant house with a cross-gable roof rests on a concrete foundation with an attached one-story, one-bay frame garage. Flush wood siding covers the house and asphalt shingles clad the steeply-pitched gable roofs. One-over-one vinyl windows have replaced the original wood windows. The interior remains completely intact with all original materials. The Yancey Family had the house built in the mid-1950s when they delved into the poultry business. The house has been renovated, is in excellent condition, and was recently rented as a single-dwelling.

Poultry Houses, ca. 1955, Contributing Buildings (2)

These two buildings are long, rectangular shaped buildings on low concrete block walls with frame walls and gabled roofs clad in standing-seam and corrugated metal. Both buildings are in poor condition; with one nearby shed that has been pushed over.

Silos, ca. 1985, Non-Contributing Structures (2)

Two metal grain silos are located at the entrance to the poultry houses, and were constructed after the property's period of significance.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☒ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

COMMERCE

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

TRANSPORTATION

ARCHITECTURE

ARCHAEOLOGY – HISTORIC – NON-ABORIGINAL

Period of Significance

ca. 1820 to 1967

Significant Dates

ca. 1859

1929

1967

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American

Architect/Builder

Harrison, Reuben W. (Harrison House)

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Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

Located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia, the Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead is a 142-acre property that boasts 15 contributing resources and three non-contributing resources. The property is eligible for the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce, Entertainment/Recreation, and Transportation, representing the years of road-related tourism associated with the caverns complex. The property is located alongside U.S. Route 11 in Rockingham County, six miles north of the courthouse town of Harrisonburg; the development of Melrose Caverns and its demise are directly intertwined with U.S. Route 11 and Interstate 81. The property is eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion C in the area of Architecture for its early-20th-century rustic architecture in the buildings associated with the Melrose Caverns complex as well as the vernacular Greek Revival-style dwelling and agricultural outbuildings associated with the Harrison Farmstead. The Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead is eligible at the local level of significance under Criterion D for Archaeology – Historic – Non-Aboriginal for the Melrose Cavern ***begin redaction***

end redaction. The period of significance spans from ca. 1820, representing the earliest extant Harrison Farmstead building, to 1967 when the Melrose Caverns 99-year lease was allowed to be cancelled due to the lack of income that was generated when Interstate 81 diverted tourists and travelers away from U.S. Route 11, forcing this business, as well as others along the original Valley Pike, to close.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

Acknowledgements

The authors wish to thank the following individuals for their contributions to this nomination: Joanie Evans, Architectural Historian, and Bob Jolley, Archaeologist, of the Northern Region Preservation Office of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources; the owners of the nominated property, James, Richard, and Thomas Yancey; retired James Madison University Historic Preservation professor, Daryl Nash; and Lettie Stickley, Parks & Recreation Specialist with Grand Caverns.

Justification of Criteria

Criterion A – Commerce, Entertainment/Recreation, and Transportation

Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead is locally significant in the areas of Commerce, Entertainment/Recreation, and Transportation as a remarkably intact roadside tourism complex with direct association with the popularity of automobile-related tourism from the 1920s through the post-World War II era. The integrity of the complex allows it to illustrate the commercial and entertainment features offered by properties of this era. In 1929, Colonel Edward T. Brown, an attorney from Washington, D.C., who had recently developed Endless Caverns, less than 20 miles north, seized the opportunity to develop another cavern that was strategically located on

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the newly improved U.S. Route 11 (the former Valley Pike). To supplement his enterprise, he built a filling station with an information center not only to entice the local traveler, but the new flow of northern tourists as well. Although other caverns had opened commercially before Melrose Caverns, at least three opened, or were improved, in the Shenandoah Valley at the same time as Melrose Caverns in the late 1920s. Melrose Caverns closed in 1967 when Interstate 81 diverted traffic away from U.S. Route 11.

Criterion C – Architecture

With its limestone covered buildings and log porches, the 1929 Melrose Lodge and filling station, as well as the bridge and pump house, resemble the rustic architectural character of the National Park Service buildings that were being constructed at that time. Some of the other contemporary cavern lodges in the Shenandoah Valley were also built in limestone, but in a Tudor Revival-style. Meanwhile, the Harrison Farmstead house is a vernacular interpretation of the Greek Revival style that was prominent in the Valley. Rueben W. Harrison, a cabinet maker in the nearby turnpike hamlet of Melrose (of which the caverns were named for), built the house in 1859 for Madison Moore. Although some synthetic replacement materials were added to the house in the 1980s, the dwelling's interior retains an overall high level of integrity. Additionally, the property is a good example of a Shenandoah Valley farmstead that features intact historic outbuildings reflective of the historic evolution of agricultural practices in the Valley. Recognized in 1976 as one of Virginia's Century Farms, and in continuous family use since the early 1800s, the farm's architecture strongly reflects the agricultural heritage of the Shenandoah Valley.

Criterion D – Archaeology

Cultural resources within the Melrose Caverns have already yielded, or have the potential to yield information important in history. ***begin redaction***

end redaction

Historical Background

Harrison Farmstead

The current Harrison Farmstead was built ca. 1859 along the Dry Fork bottomlands on the north side of the Valley Pike, which at that time was the main means of communication between the courthouse towns and villages, and the many post office hamlets, that sprang up along the road. The Valley Turnpike Company was created in 1834, and by 1896, 25 of the pike's towns, villages, and hamlets had post offices.⁶

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The Harrison Farmstead was conveniently located between two hamlets, the small crossroads hamlet of Melrose, for which the caverns eventually became named, located one mile to the south of the house, and Lacey Springs, a larger, perhaps more prominent hamlet, three miles to the north. According to historic maps and extant buildings, Melrose featured a post office, a store, a Dunkard church (extant), a later gas station (extant) and a school, all surrounded by several farms. Lacey Spring, however, boasted a post office (it still has a post office), a general store (vacant), a later gas station (vacant), and numerous sophisticated Greek Revival-style houses (extant) that line the road.⁷

Family Lineage

The current Harrison Farmstead property descended from nine generations of Harrisons, beginning with **John Harrison, Sr.**, (1691-1771), who was originally from Long Island, New York, and his father from Cheshire, United Kingdom. John Harrison, Sr., eventually became a pioneer in the "Dry Fork and Smiths Creek country," and acquired a large land grant between 1742 and his death in 1771. John Harrison, Sr., and his wife Phoebe passed the property to their youngest son Capt. Reuben Harrison, a Captain in the Virginia Militia and a Justice of the Peace in Rockingham County.⁸

Capt. Reuben Harrison (1731-1807) was born in Lewes, Delaware, and eventually inherited over 1,000 acres from his father, John Harrison, Sr. Capt. Harrison and his first wife Lydia Donnell Harrison (1732-1780), who was his cousin, established their home "directly on the early Indian Road, about a mile south of his father, at what is now known as the old Allebaugh place, on the Valley Pike, a short distance from Lacey Spring." Rueben also resided here with his second wife Mary McDonald (spelled Meary in his will). Among the many children of Rueben and Lydia (and possibly Mary), their son **David Harrison** (1775-1851) is the first Harrison directly related to the nominated property. Rueben Harrison's 1802 Will denoted 14 children, of which he bequeathed to his "Son David Harrison... 323 acres of land...being the land he now lives on."⁹ This acreage of David Harrison must have included the cave, of which he is attributed to having explored and carved his name into a wall of the chamber Century Hall in 1818.¹⁰ No surviving buildings remain from this period, although further research of the ca. 1820 kitchen may reveal an earlier construction date.

In 1799, David Harrison married his first wife Elizabeth Pickering, who bore a daughter, **Lydia Harrison**. The 1830 U.S. Census denotes a total of 14 people living in David's household, 10 "free white," and four "free colored." On March 14, 1839, David's daughter Lydia married **Madison Moore** (1815-1878), the son of Reuben Moore, and they "resided at the old homestead of her father, at Virginia Caverns (Melrose Caverns) on the Valley Pike."¹¹ This "old homestead" may be associated with the extant ca. 1820 kitchen. The 1850 U.S. Census denotes Madison Moore (37) as head of household, with his wife Lydia (36), four children, Madison Moore's in-laws, David Harrison (75) and his second wife Elizabeth Harrison (69), and a William Harrison (38).¹² Both David and Elizabeth Harrison died in March the following year.

Madison Moore then gained his wife Lydia's inheritance, and sometime after that, the house that they resided in, which was probably destroyed by fire, was rebuilt in 1859 with the current

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house. An inscription in its first floor stairwell reads: "This house was built for Madison Moore in 1859 by Reuben W. Harrison."¹³ Reuben W. Harrison (1830-1913) (no known relation) was a cabinet maker, the son of Nathaniel Harrison, who resided with his wife Mary in Melrose, the turnpike hamlet just south of the farmstead. During the Civil War he served as a soldier, but was shortly sent back home to supervise and make caskets in his shop.¹⁴ The dwelling's symmetrical two-story, three-bay form with matching exterior end chimneys is characteristic of Greek Revival-inspired antebellum dwellings in the Shenandoah Valley, as are the centered entry with a single-leaf door flanked by multiple-light sidelights and a multiple-light, rectangular transom. The interior's central hall with flanking parlors is a typical floor plan of the period. Retention of the Greek Revival style window and door corner-ear moldings, original doors and mantels, crown molding, raised panel staircase, wood flooring, and lath-and-plaster walls provide further illustration of Harrison's interpretation of Greek Revival design.

The 1870 U. S. Census denotes Madison Moore as a "farmer," his wife as "keeping house," plus three white males listed as "works on farm," a 12-year-old African American "house boy," and a 45-year-old African American "domestic servant." The value of his real estate is shown as \$10,000, and his personal property is \$2,000.¹⁵ Madison Moore and his wife, Lydia, produced four children, including **Reuben Walton Moore**, who inherited the property in 1884.¹⁶ Rueben W. Moore (1841-1911), a prosperous farmer, married Fannie E. Chrisman on May 1, 1866. Early in their marriage they lived on the same property as his parents, as the 1870 U.S. Census denotes Reuben as "works on farm," his wife as "keeping house," along with their two infant children, and an 18-year-old African American male domestic servant, but without any real estate. J. Houston Harrison's 1935 The Long Grey Trail noted about Rueben Moore that: "He and his wife resided at the old homestead of his father at Virginia Caverns, the former homeplace of David Harrison, his grandfather. The residence stands to the west of the Valley Pike, the lawn and farm bordering the highway. The cavern grounds are located on the estate, a few hundred yards west of the home, and in sight of the same."¹⁷

Rueben and Fannie Moore produced a son and a daughter, and it was their son **Thomas A. Moore** who inherited the property. On July 7, 1896, Thomas A. Moore (1867-1924) married Elizabeth H. Allebaugh, and "they resided at the homestead above; where he was a successful farmer and stockman." They produced one child, **Frances Elizabeth Moore** (b. Nov. 21, 1898), who then inherited the property. On June 8, 1922, Frances married **Thomas Moore Harrison**, who was one of Rockingham County's 'progressive young farmers' who specialized in livestock.¹⁸ Frances's 1967 will left everything to her husband Thomas.¹⁹

Current Status

Thomas M. and Frances M. Harrison's only child **Elizabeth Josephine** (1925-2010) inherited the property, and she married Andrew Yancey. The Yanceys are attributed to the 1980s update to the house as well as having the farm listed with the Virginia Department of Agriculture as a Virginia Century Farm, indicating that the farm has been in operation for over one hundred years within the same family. **Andrew and Elizabeth Josephine Yancey** lived in the house until their deaths in 2010. Their three children, James, Richard, and Thomas Yancey, continue to be the sole owners of the property through interests in Melrose Caverns, Inc., and Melrose Farms, LLC.²⁰ As noted in the architectural description, the farmstead retains many of its historic

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outbuildings, as well as the 1859 Greek Revival house, making it a representative example of a Valley farmstead in continuous use for well over a century.

Melrose Caverns

Geological Development

The Shenandoah Valley caves were formed over millions of years, as sediments consolidated themselves into limestone, shales, and sandstones, which were deposited in horizontal beds in large interior seas. When the seas receded, the sedimentary rocks were folded, fractured, and displaced by great thrust faults, and during this time, thousands of feet of the rocks were eroded by water and other forces of nature. In areas underlain by weaker rocks, such as the limestone, broad valleys were formed, whereas the more resistant rocks, such as quartzite, remained as ridges. Thus were the present Allegheny Mountains and the Shenandoah Valley formed.²¹

In the Shenandoah Valley, surface water penetrated the weak, soluble limestone and underground streams developed and carved out channels of considerable size. When the water table lowered, the streams dried up, leaving the large underground rooms, or chambers. When groundwater seeps through the earth and drips into the caves, it evaporates, leaving particles of calcium carbonate. These particles form stalactites and stalagmites, and when these two come together, a column is formed.²²

Of the seven major public caves that formed in the Shenandoah Valley, three of them occur close to Massanutten Mountain, such as Endless, Melrose, and Shenandoah caverns that lie on the mountain's west side, adjacent to the Valley Pike between Harrisonburg and Mount Jackson (to the north). Luray Caverns, the most extensive commercial cave in Virginia, formed east of Massanutten Mountain near South Fork in the broadest section of Page Valley.²³ Other caves include Skyline Caverns in Warren County, the most northern cave in the valley; Grand Caverns in Augusta County at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains along the South Fork of the Shenandoah River; and about 14 miles south of Lexington, Virginia, the Valley's south end is demarcated by Natural Bridge and Natural Bridge Caverns. At this end the waterways drain into the Maury and James rivers and not the Shenandoah and Potomac rivers.

Prehistoric and Historic Occupation

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The first historic record to mention the cave is Samuel Kercheval's 1833 History of the Valley of Virginia, when the cave was still called "Harrison's Cave." According to Kercheval, "Mr. Harrison has improved the entrance into the cave with steps, so that it is very convenient to enter it. This cave, which the author explored, presents several most interesting works of nature."²⁴

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In J. Houston Harrison's Settlers by the Long Grey Trail (1935), the author stated that "The earliest date so far discovered is said to be 1793." He also noted that William Harrison, the son of David Harrison, carved the date 1818 into the chamber known as Century Hall. He further noted that in 1824, David Harrison "improved the entrance by carving there-in a stairway out of the solid rock, affording easy access to visitors."²⁵

begin redaction

Civil War Occupation

[REDACTED]

end redaction

Col. Edward T. Brown's Late 1920s Development

When Lowell Thomas visited the caves in May 1934, they had been commercially opened for almost five years, opening on June 19, 1929. Col. Edward Thomas Brown (1859-1933), an attorney from Atlanta, Georgia (hence his honorific title), developed Melrose Caverns after successfully opening Endless Caverns about nine miles northeast. By 1920, Col. Brown, his wife Mary (Meemee), their two children Edward M. and Marjorie, and their four servants had settled into Washington, D.C. Both Col. Brown and his son, Major Edward M. Brown, were practicing attorneys. Around this same time, upon a visit to the Shenandoah Valley, and with the encouragement of Meemee, Col. Brown decided to commercially develop an available cave.³⁰ Located three miles east of U.S. Route 11 in northern Rockingham County, Endless Caverns opened ca. 1920 on the west base of Massanutten Mountain with sweeping views of the Great Valley and the Allegheny Mountains.

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Rosendale, a large Greek Revival-style house at the base of the mountain below Endless Caverns and fronting Smith Creek (of which Dry Fork is a tributary), became one of the dwellings of the affluent Col. Brown and his wife Meemee. The Browns also maintained a townhouse in Washington, D.C., and a house in Miami Beach, Florida (with four servants). As an experienced and successful attorney and prosperous business person, Col. Brown seized the opportunity to open another cave with even more potential as it was strategically located on an improved major road and featured Civil War memorabilia in its chambers (perhaps more so than any other known cave in Virginia).

On July 27, 1928, Col. Brown entered into a lease with "Frances Harrison and Thomas Harrison, her husband...for the purpose of developing all underground caverns located thereon, and conducting thereon a caverns business...for a term of ninety-nine years, beginning on the first day of August, 1928..." The lease further stated:

It is expressly understood and agreed as an express condition precedent of this lease contract that the same shall not be assigned, sublet or transferred, either in whole or in part, to any non-white person, as defined by Virginia law. And further understood and agreed that no non-white shall during the continuance of the lease acquire any interest whatsoever either in or to said leased premises or any business or activity conducted thereon. A breach of this "non-white" restriction shall entitle the lessors herein to the immediate cancellation and revocation of the lease agreement.³¹

Such restrictions based on race were commonplace in Virginia during this period (known as the Jim Crow era), in which racial segregation was embedded in state and local law as well as in social traditions and everyday business practices. Civil rights legislation during the 1960s rendered them obsolete.

The 1928 deed referred to the lessee as the Blue Grottoes of Virginia, for a total of 29 acres. Work began less than a month later on September 15, 1928. Col. Brown and his son Edward quickly spent \$100,000 constructing the Lodge, the Grottoes Filling Station, and the connecting bridge, and opened the caverns less than a year after the lease was signed. Col. Brown adapted the cave with a new, level entrance with no steps, a feature not found in any other cave in the Valley. Electricity was installed and gravel pathways added. The caverns, referred to as "one of the most historical caves in the United States," contain a total of 1,345 feet of passages which vary from 10 to 20 feet in width and 6 to 15 feet in height, with vaulted ceilings in some rooms. Further, it retains its natural rural setting, without the associated commercial attractions.

Comparison to other Commercial Shenandoah Valley Caverns

Luray Caverns, located well off the U.S. Route 11/I-81 corridor on the east side of Massanutten Mountain in Page County, is a main attraction as visitors drive up U.S. Route 211 towards the Skyline Drive on top of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Discovered and opened in 1878, Luray Caverns, with 1.25 miles of pathways and one of two National Natural Landmark caverns in Virginia, is dwarfed by its manufactured attractions of a garden maze, a Luray Valley museum, a car museum, restaurant, toy shop, candy shop, parking lot, and gas station. However, these

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accompaniments likely augment the caverns business, as well as the local economy of Luray, with adjacent motels, restaurants, and a country club. The Luray Caverns' ca. 1928 Lodge, now entered through a rear addition, is a playfully-designed, one-and-one-half-story, Tudor Revival-style building of uncoursed limestone, a variety of steeply pitched roofs with terracotta tiles, a large interior stone chimney, and an open roof design with arched trusses. This building remains in good condition.

Grand Caverns (originally Weyers Cave) in the Town of Grottoes, Virginia, off Route 340 on the Rockingham and Augusta counties line eight miles east of U.S. Route 11/I- 81, retains a natural setting along Cave Hill and the South River. Grand Caverns is one of three caves in Cave Hill, and the only one continuously open to the public. It opened for public use in 1806, making it the 'Oldest Show-Cave in North America' and a designated Natural National Landmark. The cave has 8,694 feet of commercial passages with 230 Confederate and Union signatures. On October 1, 2009, the Town of Grottoes took possession of the caverns and manages it under their Department of Recreation. Cave Hill is located within their town park, Grand Caverns Regional Park.³² Their ca. 1928 Lodge, the only manmade structure on the property, aside from a modern entrance to the cave, is a well-designed, two-story Tudor Revival-style building with dressed limestone, wood timbering, and a slate-covered steeply-pitched roof. Originally, visitors were lodged on the second floor; this building remains unmodified and in good condition.

Located in northern Rockingham County, **Endless Caverns** opened ca. 1920 on the west base of Massanutten Mountain. The architecture of the Endless Caverns lodge, cave entrance, and colonnade is dressed limestone that is typical of other cavern lodges in the Valley of that day. The entrance into the cave is connected to the colonnade and protected by double-leaf, cast-metal gates. This lodge is similar to Melrose but on a smaller scale, with one centered interior stone chimney, and the open ceiling with exposed wood trusses, all darkly stained. Built on a wooded hillside, the current manmade setting has been kept on an unobtrusive scale, capturing the natural, rustic setting, where one just wants to rest and enjoy the view. To provide additional revenue for the business, a recreational vehicle (RV) and camping area has discreetly been added below the north side of the caverns complex.

Melrose Caverns Development and U.S. Route 11

Some of the major caverns have changed their names, including Melrose. The original legal name was Blue Grottoes of Virginia. An advertisement also denoted "Blue Grottoes, the Civil War Caverns." Not long after the caverns opened to the public, Col. Brown died on March 10, 1933, in Washington, D.C. A July 14, 1933, deed noted, after the death of Col. Brown, that the name was now "Virginia Caverns, Inc." and signed by his son.³³ This name did not last long either, likely due to the objection of other cave owners arguing that this name reflected some sort of honorific designation owing to the Commonwealth that it did not deserve, and thus the name was finally changed to "Melrose Caverns and Civil War Museum." The cavern was named for the small crossroads community of Melrose, one mile south of U.S. Route 11, which is where the builder of the Harrison Farmstead house had lived. The cavern is now simply called Melrose Caverns.

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Various commercial pamphlets of the 1930s advertised not only the breathtaking beauty of the caverns, but also that the owners of Melrose Caverns supported the Garden Club of Virginia because they did not advertise on roadside billboards. This seems like an important statement because this was prior to the age of television, and the business would have to rely on word of mouth, the radio, and simply by the buildings themselves that fronted U.S. Route 11.

Development of the Melrose Caverns occurred at a favorable time, coinciding with the rise of automobile-based tourism and the state highway department's commencement, in 1928, of a systematic improvement and reconstruction of U.S. Route 11. The Luray, Endless, and Grand Caverns lodges were also built ca. 1928. The road reconfiguration involved re-engineering the surface, grading, and making alignments to transform the route into a high-speed motor vehicle road that attracted a rapidly growing number of vehicles. The original organic road bed was shifted, modified, straightened, raised, and widened with a new road surface constructed with a three-inch layer of crushed-stone covered with stiff asphalt that bound the stone together, which became known as "tarmac." Eventually it became necessary to impose a 20 miles per hour speed limit.³⁴

The reconstructed road prompted an increase in the value of adjacent land. During the decade from 1935 to the mid-1940s, rural roadside real estate in Virginia more than doubled in value. In addition to the caverns themselves, this roadside attraction also boasted its own filling station (just as Luray Caverns does today). Free-standing gas stations began to line U.S. Route 11 in the 1920s, although many of these are no longer standing.

Erecting a filling station at the entrance to the attraction was a marketing tool to entice travelers to stop, and perhaps tour the caverns. The filling station featured waiting rooms and an information center. An original pamphlet for the Historic Blue Grottoes of Virginia encouraged tourists to "visit the headquarters of the Virginia Fairy Stone Company which are now located in the Blue Grottoes Filling Station. Here the famous little Fairy or Lucky stones may be seen in their natural state as they were taken from the mountain sides of Patrick County, Va."

Current Status

A preliminary windshield survey conducted by the author in December 2013 along U.S. Route 11 in Rockingham County, noted only three other early 20th century gas stations, all vacant. One exception is the operating "Melrose City" gas station in the hamlet of Melrose, which may be a 1950s station that was modified with a stone veneer and canopy that imitates the appearance of the Melrose Caverns filling station. The example at Melrose Caverns is an excellent and rare 1920s free-standing filling station.

With the post-World War II economic boom and the increased production of automobiles, the traffic count along U.S. Route 11 (between 1948 and 1958) increased dramatically throughout all the Shenandoah Valley counties and more than doubled along some segments. However, with the introduction of franchise businesses in towns and the opening of Interstate 81 in the 1960s, most traffic as well as money was siphoned away from the local businesses and roads, forcing a decline in transportation and economic prosperity along the U.S. Route 11 corridor.

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Due to the economic downturn, the 99-year lease was terminated, and the Melrose Caverns and Lodge closed in 1967. The gas station sputtered along for several more years, before closing down around 1970. Both the lodge and the filling station attempted new uses, the lodge as a dinner theatre and event location for nearby James Madison University, and the filling station as a single dwelling rental. The traffic count on U.S. Route 11 between 1978 and 2001 showed a gradual and steady increase in traffic.³⁵ The road became a popular alternative for weary travelers and local commuters who prefer to avoid the trucks and speed that Interstate 81 demands, opting rather for the slower pace, scenic beauty, and history that U.S. Route 11 has to offer.

Archaeological Potential

No formal archaeological investigations have been conducted at the Harrison Farmstead, although the area around the ca. 1820 kitchen has great potential to yield information related to early-19th-century material culture and subsistence practices. In addition, there is potential to yield information related to locations of former buildings on the property as well as lifeways and material culture of African Americans.

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While there are no commercially-operated caverns listed on the Virginia Landmarks Register, two caverns—Luray and Grand Caverns, both in the Shenandoah Valley—are listed as National Natural Landmarks through the U.S. Department of the Interior. Further, there are three caves that are listed as archaeological sites on the Virginia Landmarks Register. As a comparatively rare resource type that has not been disturbed for many years, the Melrose Caverns has great potential to yield more information related to prehistory and history in Virginia.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Secondary Resources

Harrison, Houston J., *Settlers By The Long Grey Trail: Some Pioneers to Old Augusta County, Virginia and Their Descendants, of the Family of Harrison and Allied Lines*.
Harrisonburg, VA: C. J. Carrier Company, Copyright 1935, Republished 1975.

Hofstra, Warren R. and Karl Raitz, eds., *The Great Valley Road: Shenandoah Landscapes From Prehistory to the Present*. Charlottesville, VA: University Press, 2010.

Public Records

Rockingham County Deed Books, 141/528, 155/106, 1228/423, 1396/777, 4074/329.
Harrisonburg, VA. December, 2013.

Rockingham County Will Books, 2/499, 2/737, 2/1878, 4/1, 9/59, 10/110, 27/211.
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Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Archaeological Reconnaissance Report, Melrose Cavern (DHR 44RM0097), Richmond, VA.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Intensive Level Report, David Harrison Homestead (DHR082-0017), Richmond, VA.

Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Preliminary Information Form, Melrose Caverns Buildings (DHR 082-0017), Richmond, VA.

U.S. Census: 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850, and 1870, *Ancestry.com*, December, 2013.

Maps

Lake, D.J. & Co., *Atlas of Rockingham County*. Philadelphia, PA, 1885. (Reprint from Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society).

Showalter, Noah D., *Atlas of Rockingham County, VA, 1939*. Staunton, VA: McClure Printing Co., Inc.

Wayland, John W., *"Stonewall Jackson's Way,"* Verona, VA: McClure Printing Co., Inc. 1956.

Site Visits and E-Mails, November and December, 2013

Jolley, Bob, Northern Region Archaeologist, Virginia Department of Historic Resources, site visit.

Stickley, Lettie, Parks & Recreation Specialist, Grand Caverns, Town of Grottoes, site visit.

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Yancey, James, co-owner, and descendant of Harrisons, site visits.

Yancey, Richard, co-owner, and descendant of Harrisons, site visits and E-Mails.

Yancey, Thomas, E-Mails.

Personal Papers of the Yancey Family

Miscellaneous untitled newspaper articles, historic pamphlets, and historic photographs directly relating to Melrose Caverns; and historic photographs of the Harrison Farmstead.

Booklet

McConkey, Jim, ed. The Story of Cave Hill, Town of Grottoes, VA. 2010.

Unpublished Manuscript

Murphy, Paul J. "Georgia Relatives of Woodrow Wilson," New Market, VA, 2014.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # _____

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): VDHR File Nos. 082-0117 and 44RM0097

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property approximately 142 acres

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Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: _____
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

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Or

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☐ NAD 1983

| | | |
|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 2. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 3. Zone: | Easting: | Northing: |
| 4. Zone: | Easting : | Northing: |

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nominated boundaries include the land currently associated with the Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead which is owned by the Yancey family and historically associated with the property. ***begin redaction*** These are the same parcels that are denoted in the accompanied Rockingham County, Virginia tax plat, which include the following eight parcel identification numbers: 81-(A)-L53, 81-(A)-L53A, 81-(A)-L54, 81-(A)-L55, 81-(A)-L55A, 81-(A)-L83, and 81-(A)-L84.

end redaction

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries of the nominated property include the 142 acres that are associated with the Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead which are owned by the Yancey family. The

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boundaries encompass the Harrison Farmstead house and all of its contributing and non-contributing resources and the Melrose Caverns and all its contributing resources described in the nomination, as well as the historic setting that remains in farming use today.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Anne Stuart Beckett and Mark McConnell, AIA

organization: Summit Studio

street & number: 102 E. Roanoke Street

city or town: Blacksburg state: VA zip code: 24060

e-mail: mm@thesummitstudio.com

telephone: 540.915.1233

date: December 9, 2013

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Nomination Photographs

Photo Log: All photographs are common to:

Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead, VDHR File Number: 082-0117

County: Rockingham County, VA

Photographer: Anne Stuart Beckett

Date Photographed: November and December, 2013

Digitals Repository: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond, Virginia.

Photo 1 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0001
View: Landscape view looking west of Harrison Farmstead denoting house, kitchen, and barn.

Photo 2 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0002
View: View looking south denoting pond, barn, and house.

Photo 3 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0003

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View: View looking northwest of Harrison House and kitchen.

Photo 4 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0004

View: View looking northeast of Harrison kitchen.

Photo 5 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0005

View: View looking west at Harrison barn.

Photo 6 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0006

View: View looking south-southwest at Melrose Caverns Lodge.

Photo 7 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0007

View: View south of interior of Lodge from balcony.

Photo 8 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0008

View: View south of interior of lodge from first floor entrance.

Photo 9 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0009

View: Detail of rear wall (southeast) and fireplace of the lodge.

Photo 10 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0010

View: Detail of cavern door entrance.

Photo 11 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0011

View: View of first facial carving in cave denoting face to the left of photo and hand- drilled torch hole to right.

Photo 12 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0012

View: Detail of first facial carving in cave.

Photo 13 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0013

View: View of second facial carving in cave.

Photo 14 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0014

View: View of column in cave with Union soldier's inscriptions.

Photo 15 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0015

View: Detail of column in cave with Union soldier's inscriptions.

Photo 16 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0016

View: View looking north along Route 11 and the Melrose Caverns Filling Station.

Photo 17 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0017

View: View looking south of the Melrose Caverns Filling Station.

Photo 18 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0018

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View: Landscape view looking northeast denoting the Melrose Caverns Lodge and bridge.

Photo 19 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0019

View: Detail view of bridge over Dry Fork looking south.

Photo 20 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0020

View: View of bridge and road looking southeast back towards Route 11.

Photo 21 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0021

View: View north of Tenant House.

Photo 22 of 22: VA_RockinghamCounty_MelroseCavernsAndHarrisonFarmstead_0022

View: View north of poultry house and silo.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

ENDNOTES

¹ Richard Yancey, conversation, November 2013.

² Richard Yancey, site visit, December, 2013.

³ Bob, Jolley, site visit, December, 2013.

⁴ Virginia Department of Historic Resources files, David Harrison Homestead Intensive Level Survey, 4-5, Richmond, VA.

⁵ James Yancey, site visit, December, 2013.

⁶ Hofstra, Warren E. and Karl Raitz, *The Great Valley Road*. (Charlottesville, VA: University Press, 2010), 168-169.

⁷ Lake, D.J. & Co. Atlas of Rockingham County (Philadelphia, PA, 1885); Windshield Survey conducted by the Arthur.

⁸ Virginia Department of Historic Resources Files, *David Harrison Homestead Intensive Level Survey*, 2012; J. Houston Harrison, *Settlers by the Long Grey Trail* (Harrisonburg: C.J. Carrier Company, 1975) 307 and 307, Ancestry.com.

⁹ J. Houston Harrison, *Settlers by the Long Grey Trail* (Harrisonburg: C.J. Carrier Company, 1975) 307 and 311, Rockingham County Will Book 4/1.

¹⁰ Ibid, 608.

¹¹ Rockingham County Will Book 2/737; Ibid, 499.

¹² U.S. Census, 1850, of Madison Moore, *Ancestry.com*, December, 2013.

¹³ Rockingham County Will Book 2/1878; Richard Yancey site visit.

¹⁴ J. Houston Harrison, 517.

¹⁵ U.S. Census, 1870, of Madison Moore, *Ancestry.com*, December, 2013.

¹⁶ Rockingham County Will Book 9/59

¹⁷ J. Houston Harrison, 589.

¹⁸ Ibid, 589 and 607.

¹⁹ Rockingham County Will Book 10/211; Will Book 27/110.

²⁰ Rockingham County Deed Book 1228/423; 1396/777; and 4074/329.

Melrose Caverns and Harrison Farmstead

Name of Property

Rockingham County, VA

County and State

- ²¹ Jim McConkey, The Story of Cave Hill, (Town of Grottoes, VA, 2010)2.
²² Ibid, 2.
²³ Hofstra, 42.
²⁴ Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Preliminary Information Form, Melrose Caverns Buildings, 2012.
²⁵ J. Houston Harrison, 608; A 1930 "Blue Grottoes" brochure stated that the earliest inscribed date in the cave was 1793.
²⁶ J. Houston Harrison, 608.
²⁷ Thomas Yancey E-Mail, December, 2013.
²⁸ Ibid.
²⁹ Virginia Department of Historic Resources Files, David Harrison Homestead Intensive Level Survey, 2012.
³⁰ Paul J. Murphy, Ph.D., "Georgia Relatives of Woodrow Wilson," (New Market, VA, 2014).
³¹ Rockingham County Deed Book 141/528.
³² Jim McConkey, The Story of Cave Hill, (Town of Grottoes, VA, 2010); Lettie Stickley, personal interview and site visit.
³³ Rockingham County Deed Book 155/106.
³⁴ Hofstra, 250-251.
³⁵ Ibid, 280.
³⁶ Melrose Caverns (DHR 44RM0097); Bob Jolley conversation, December, 2013.